



## **REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT**

**For projects starting in  
FY2015 (July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015)**

**Publication Date: July 14, 2014**

**Submission Deadline: August 29, 2014**

## **IOWA ARTS COUNCIL**

Iowa Great Places is administered by the Iowa Arts Council,  
a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

### IOWA GREAT PLACES REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTENT

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board are pleased to announce this Request for Letters of Intent from applicants seeking designation as a new Iowa Great Place and funding for eligible infrastructure projects. We invite Letters of Intent from lead applicants that share the program vision, goals, and objectives:

**The vision of Iowa Great Places is to have a transformative impact on community vitality and quality of life for Iowans.**

The program's **goals** are to align State and local resources toward cultivating the unique and authentic qualities of Iowa neighborhoods, districts, communities and regions in order to make them great places to live and work.

The **objectives** of the program are to support projects that are integrated with a shared vision and set of strategies, involve significant partnerships and collaboration, and focus on the development of local and regional assets in the following areas:

- Arts and Culture
- Built Environment
- Business Development
- Diversity
- Entrepreneurial Incentives
- Historic Fabric
- Housing Options
- Natural Environment
- Retail Amenities

### APPLICATION SUMMARY & DESIGNATION

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By submitting a Letter of Intent, a lead applicant acknowledges that it is seeking both designation as an Iowa Great Place on behalf of an Iowa neighborhood, district, community or region as well as grant funding to support related, eligible projects.

Based on their Letter of Intent, eligible lead applicants may be invited to submit a full proposal for consideration by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Great Places Citizens' Advisory Board. Lead applicants invited to submit a full proposal that is awarded funding will earn designation as an Iowa Great Place on behalf of their neighborhood, district, community or region. Designation as an Iowa Great Place remains in effect beyond the funding period.

Please note: Submission of a Letter of Intent to apply does not guarantee designation as an Iowa Great Place, a minimum funding level or funding awarded beyond the FY2015 round.

### TIMELINE

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**Deadline to Submit [Online Letter of Intent](#)**

August 29, 2014, 11:59 PM

**Notification of Invitation to Submit Application\***

September 5, 2014

**Deadline to Submit Application**

November 1, 2014, 11:59 PM (This is not a postmark deadline.)

**Notification of Funding Decision**

By December 1, 2014

\*An invitation to submit a full proposal is neither a guarantee of funding nor an endorsement of the applicant or project(s) by Iowa Great Places, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs or the State of Iowa.

## ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

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Letters of Intent will be accepted from lead applicants representing a single entity, collaboration between two or more entities or a consortium of project partners. Lead applicants must meet a basic eligibility requirement listed below.

The lead applicant will serve as the designated grantee, should the project(s) be awarded funding, and will be subject to reporting requirements and all other terms of a signed grant agreement with the State of Iowa.

Lead applicant partners and collaborating entities are not subject to eligibility requirements; however, they may be subject to a review of financial and programmatic performance during the selection process.

### Eligible Lead Applicants

- Nonprofit organizations incorporated in Iowa that have federal tax-exempt status
- Local and county government
- Tribal councils
- Municipal agencies with 28E agreements
- Lead applicants previously designated an Iowa Great Place and who remain within their period of eligibility to seek grant funding for related projects

### Ineligible Lead Applicants

- State and federal government agencies
- Commercial and for-profit entities
- Department of Cultural Affairs grantees who have an outstanding Final Report
- Lead applicants previously designated an Iowa Great Place who are no longer within their period of eligibility to seek grant funding for related projects

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

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The proposed project(s) must primarily involve the creation or renovation of vertical infrastructure. Vertical infrastructure projects deemed beneficial to the public and expected to last and be maintained for a minimum of twenty years will be given consideration.

### Types of Eligible Project Activities

- Land acquisition
- Construction
- Major renovation and repair of buildings or appurtenant structures
- Site development
- Park, trail, or permanent design exhibits

### Types of Ineligible Project Activities

- Routine, reoccurring maintenance
- Operational expenses
- Ongoing utilities
- Lease of a building or appurtenant structures without a lease-purchase agreement
- Stand-alone planning and design phase of project

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to: cultural facilities and amenities, public art, building rehabilitation, way-finding signage, mixed use developments, streetscape enhancements, and development of trails and parks.

## FUNDING

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### Available Funding and Request Amount

The Iowa Legislature has appropriated \$1 million dollars, through the Rebuild Iowa Infrastructure Fund (RIIF), to the Iowa Great Places program for FY2015 (July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015). The Legislature's appropriation, in addition to any remaining funds from past appropriations, constitutes the available funding for the program to award.

Iowa Great Places does not recommend or specify a grant request amount or range for individual projects; grant awards will be made on a case-by-case basis. From FY2006-FY2014, grant awards for individual projects ranged from \$3,000 to \$571,000. The average grant award for an individual project was \$159,000; the median grant was \$95,000.

### Match Requirement

Up to one-half (50%) of the total project cost may be requested from Iowa Great Places. This means that for every \$1 of grant funding requested, \$0.50 of applicant match is required. At least 75% of the match must be cash; up to 25% may be obtained from in-kind sources.

While the minimum match requirement is 50%, competitive proposals will demonstrate broad-based community support for their project(s). The match requirement may be raised through a combination of public and private sources. Competitive proposals will demonstrate that public funding sources have been adequately leveraged to obtain private dollars.

### **Funding Period**

Upon receiving the Iowa Great Places designation and entering into a grant agreement with the State of Iowa, lead applicants may receive grant funds on a reimbursement basis (after expenses have been incurred) for project activities submitted and approved in the grant agreement. **All project activities and incurred expenses must occur within three (3) consecutive years from the time that the Iowa Great Places grant agreement is executed to be eligible for reimbursement.**

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

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Submitted Letters of Intent are reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility and adherence to published guidelines. Letters of Intent determined by staff to be eligible will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be reviewed by staff for completion, eligibility and adherence to published guidelines. Eligible proposals will be referred a competitive review by the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. The Board's funding recommendations are submitted to the Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs for consideration and funding approval. All funding decisions are final.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

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Competitive applications will exemplify bold thought and innovation; encourage creativity and entrepreneurship; foster a sense of place and identity; and demonstrate a commitment to enhancing community vitality and quality of life.

Competitive applicants will also demonstrate evidence of:

- A guiding vision plan and interrelated set of strategies supported by multiple partners
- Broad based financial support for the project(s) and a strong record of financial performance
- Organizational capacity and a strong record of programmatic performance and service to constituents
- Prioritization of project(s) that can be realistically completed within funding period

A scoring rubric with corresponding review criteria will be made available to applicants invited to submit an application.

## **LETTER OF INTENT SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

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Lead applicants must submit one Letter of Intent by 11:59 PM Friday, August 29, 2014. **Letters of Intent must be submitted online through the Iowa Arts Council's [Slideroom](#) portal.**

Late, incomplete or ineligible Letters will not be accepted.

Applicants should prepare the following in advance of completing and submitting the Letter of Intent online:

- Lead Applicant Contact Information
- Community Profile Questions
- Brief description of how the vision plan aligns with the Iowa Great Places goals, objectives and review criteria
- Description of partners including their role in the project(s)
- Description of project(s) for which funding is requested including start and end dates of major project activities
- Project Budget including total project cost, grant request amount and evidence of required match

## **QUESTIONS**

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Please direct all inquiries to:

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